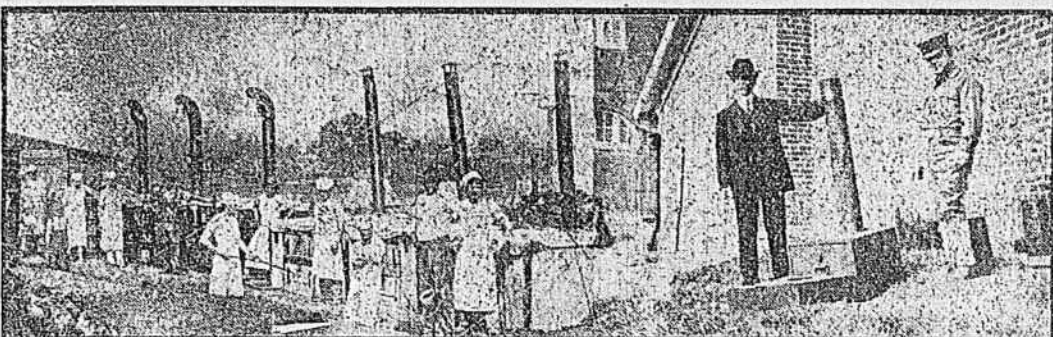


# Uncle Sam in the Role of Cook



FOUR BAKERS AND THE MAN-MILLING OVENS.

THIS IS THE KIND OF LOAVES THE SOLDIERS EAT.



A DIVISION FIELD BAKERY. Uncle Sam could make bread for 250,000 soldiers.

THE FULL EQUIPMENT CAN BE LOADED UPON A WAGON.

What the Army Will Eat To-Morrow—Its Christmas Dinner and What It Costs—Good Meals at 7 Cents Apiece—The Emergency Ration, Which Weighs Half a Pound, but Will Feed a Man for a Day—A Look at the Cooking and Baking School—How the Government Makes Bread—The New Field Ranges—Cooking and Baking Arrangements Now Ready for an Army of a Quarter of a Million—Kitchen Cars for the Troops.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.  
Washington, D. C.

THIS letter is to tell you of the new preparations which Uncle Sam, Patriarch, is making for feeding his army. What kind of a Christmas dinner will he give it to-morrow? We have about 50,000 soldiers, and they are all mighty hungry. Now that the army has become a great fighting machine, their labor in times of peace is quite as hard as it would be in war. None of them lacks appetite, and they all want the best. The man who has charge of feeding them is the commissary-general. His name is Henry G. Sharpe, and he graduated at West Point thirty-one years ago. He started his military career with this branch of the service, and he has served in every department of it and in every one of the United States possessions. He has had charge of emergency work in various parts of the Union, has been in Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines, and for some years has been commissary-general of the United States Army. It is from him and his department that the information I now give you comes.

Christmas Dinner With the Soldiers. And now as to the Christmas dinner. It will be varied according to the location of the troops. There are fat turkeys in Porto Rico and the Chinese

raise them by the hundreds on the east coast of Asia. There is plenty of wild game in Alaska, and each army post, and especially those in the West, has its peculiar supplies. In the main, however, the Christmas dinner will be made up from the same markets as yours or mine, and the government has written its menu to suit. Here is a Christmas dinner suggested by the commissary-general. It comes from a manual which has been recently prepared for the cooks of the army.

Oyster soup and crackers.  
Roast turkey and dressing, cranberry sauce.  
Cold boiled ham.  
Mashed potatoes. Candied sweet potatoes.  
Creamed corn. Creamed peas.  
Brown gravy.  
Bread and butter.  
Shrimp salad. Celery. Olives.  
Loaf cake.  
Chocolate layer cake. Fruit cake. Jelly roll.  
Mince pie. Lemon meringue pie.  
Cheese and crackers.  
Mixed nuts. Assorted candies.  
Apples. Oranges. Bananas.  
Grapes.  
Chocolate. Coffee.  
Cigars.

How do you like it? It is fit for a King, and it seems a costly feast for Uncle Sam to supply to eighty thousand of his children. Upon investigation, however, I find that a dinner like this can be served for less than 30 cents. That is the price the commissary-general allows for the soldiers on transports, where the meals cost more than on land.

Twenty-Three Cents a Day. Indeed, the cost of feeding the army is one of the most important things connected with the commissary. The government has to know just what it is spending, and at present the army rations cost only a little more than \$6,000,000 a year. This sum supplies the food for all the soldiers and the cost is so calculated that the cooks have to market and serve out the rations at so much a meal.

The average price now paid is less than 3 cents. It is 23.1 cents per ration, and a ration means three meals. Last year the soldiers in the Philippines averaged less than a nickel a meal, and the yearly cost of sub-

sistence per man per day, the whole army through, was less than 32 cents.

These are the figures for these days of high prices, and they lead one to think that the food must be skimpy and poor. It is not. It is the best that can be bought in the markets, and the variety is greater than that of the average family in the United States. I have before me the bills of fare for one month as suggested by the commissary to the army cooks. They consist of thirty-one typical breakfasts, thirty-one dinners and thirty-one suppers, no two of which are the same.

Good Meals at Seven Cents Per Man. I would like to give you housekeepers who are trying to make the ends meet some specimens of these rations. I venture that any one of you would consider the average menu good enough for your family. They are practically the same as those supplied to the soldiers at the Washington barracks, the meals for which are prepared by the students of Uncle Sam's School for Army Bakers and Cooks. This school I describe farther on in this letter. In it each student has, from time to time, to plan out, prepare and be responsible for one day's rations for the sixty men at the barracks. He has to keep the cost of each item of food, and on the average the day's rations must not run over 22.13 cents per man. This means a little more than 7 cents per meal, which is close to the average cost that Uncle Sam pays the whole army through.

The bills of fare I choose are those of one day last week, as selected and prepared by one of the student cooks. The penmanship is crude and the man is probably uneducated. His breakfast consisted of pork chops, fried potatoes, hot griddle cakes and syrup, bread and butter, peaches and cream and coffee. A very good meal for 7 cents! Is it not? The dinner comprised a vegetable soup, roast pork and gravy, tomatoes with salad dressing, apple sauce, chocolate layer cake, coffee and bread. Not at all bad for 7 cents. The supper included beef, fried potatoes, sliced cheese, plain cake and doughnuts and coffee and bread. Another good 7-cent meal. I would say, however, that the student has a right to spend a little more for breakfast, provided he cuts down on the supper or the dinner. Or he can add to the dinner and supper as he

pleases; the only requirement is that the day's three meals do not cost more than 22.13 cents per man. Such meals are served by every student-cook and student baker. He has to keep all inside the allowance of 22 cents for three meals.

Cooking Schools for the Army. And this brings me to Uncle Sam's new schools for army cooks and bakers. These have been established in the last two or three years, and they have already graduated about fifteen hundred cooks and over seven hundred bakers. The old cooks are being brought in and given instruction and new men are appointed from the various divisions to come to these schools to learn cooking, so that within a short time the army will have several thousand graduated cooks and bakers. This education is being done in three schools, each of which has been built and equipped for the purpose. One of these is at the Presidio, near San Francisco, another at Fort Riley, Kan., and a third here at Washington. The Presidio school is expected to supply cooks for the armies of the West; that at Fort Riley for those troops which are located in the central part of the United States, and that here for the soldiers of the East. All have been in operation for some time and all are graduating a number of cooks and bakers every year. The Washington school was established in 1906. It is now under the charge of Captain Elliott and its chief is a sergeant who is famous for his cooking, as well as his father before him.

Armed with a letter from the commissary-general, I visited the school this afternoon, and saw about twenty bare-armed, white-capped husky young men, with their sleeves rolled to the elbows, kneading dough, putting bread in and out of ovens, and presiding over a large number of ranges where food of all kinds was being cooked for the troops at the Washington barracks. In one room I was shown a chemical laboratory where the student-cooks are taught how to test flour and to know whether it is pure or not. They ascertain the amount of moisture in the flour, and also its feeding value. They learn something of arithmetic and of the keeping of accounts, and each must know just what goes in to the dishes he prepares and how much they cost when given to the soldiers. Everything is done by weights and measures, and it takes a man of more than ordinary intelligence to pass through the school and become a graduate.

A Kitchen as Big as a Barn.

The kitchen of the school is an interesting place. It is about seventy-five feet square, with a high roof, the whole covering the most of the one-story building which has been built for it. The walls are of white tiles, and the floor is cement. There are long tables running through the center, and near them a great dough trough. At the back are two huge bake ovens, one of which is permanent and is faced with white tiles, and another made of iron coated with porcelain. The latter can be taken down and moved at a moment's notice.

A part of the education of the students is connected with this oven. They are made to take it apart and put it together, and upon graduation any one of them could go with it to the Philippines or anywhere else and start a bakery there. The oven is twelve feet wide and about fifteen feet long and high to a man's head. It will cook 400 loaves at once and can bake thousands of loaves in a day.

Could Supply Bread for 250,000 Men. In addition to this the students are taught to bake in field ovens, which can be put up and knocked down and carried from one place to another on wagons.

A full bakery of that kind and all of its equipment can be put in a two-horse wagon, and there are enough of them here to turn out 20,000 loaves of bread a day. Each of the other baking schools has a similar equipment, so that Uncle Sam could put into the field bakeries and the men to run them sufficient to supply 50,000 pounds of bread a day to his soldiers. He has in addition, so the commissary-general tells me, a sufficient equipment for ten other divisions, so that upon occasion he can now supply enough bread for 250,000 men, giving each a pound loaf per day.

Uncle Sam's Army Bread. During my stay at the bakery I looked at some of the bread. The loaves are larger than those sold in the private bakeries. They are white and crisp and the crust is delicious. They come out in great sheets of six loaves each, all baked to a turn. While looking at them I talked with the sergeant in charge about the cost of the bread and was told that it was just about equal to the flour required to make it. Said the man:

"We are required to run this bakery

at over 30 per cent profit, and to tell the truth, we run it at about 10 per cent. We find we can do that, and sell a loaf of bread at just the cost of the pound of flour that is supposed to go into the making of that loaf. This seems strange to you, but you must remember that there is a great deal of water in bread. Now, the water account when the pound loaf of bread is sold. The man who knows anything about baking need not lie awake at night worrying about the profits of his baker. They are very large."

This Bread Keeps Fresh Two Weeks.

Another bread made here is such that it will keep for days and still remain fresh and good. This is after a French method, the bread being made in long round loaves, one of which stood upon end, would reach to the height of one's waist. The loaf is half split before baking, and in this way an additional amount of crust is formed. Such bread is good when the army is marching so rapidly that new bread cannot be supplied from day to day. It should be good and palatable for fifteen days after making, and it is intended to be used when the troops cannot be supplied with soft bread and to obviate the necessity of using hard bread at such times.

The Emergency Ration.

And just here I want to tell you about the emergency ration. This is a new food by means of which the soldier need never go hungry. It has been invented by the commissary-general in connection with other officers of the army, and it consists of a little package not bigger than a deck of playing cards, or when increased in tin, no larger than a half-pint flask of whiskey. It can be easily carried in one's breast pocket. This little package weighs only eight ounces, but it contains three full meals, and its nature is such that a man could live upon it for a long time if he had to. It is made of the component parts of milk and eggs, so treated and mixed with chocolate that they look exactly like the chocolate cakes you buy in the candy stores. Each ration is in the form of three cakes of equal size. Each cake is wrapped in tin foil, and all three are inclosed in an hermetically sealed round-cornered tin box of the size I have described.

I have talked with the army officers about these rations, and they tell me they are satisfying. Major-General Wood has used them when out camping, and many of the other officers carry them with them on their test rides and use no other food at such times. General Fred Grant on his last ride of ninety miles—or thirty miles a day for three days—took three of these emergency rations with him, intending to use one for each day. He found, however, that one ration, or eight ounces of this concentrated food, was sufficient for the whole three days, and he was not hungry at the close.

I am nibbling at one of these rations as I write. It tastes just like chocolate, and I am told that it can be made by any chocolate factory. We have such factories in nearly every large city, and General Sharpe tells me that an order for them might be placed at any time in thirty of our chief cities, and that each factory would turn out 15,000 to 20,000 a day. In this way we could have 500,000 such rations almost upon call. These rations keep a long time. The one I am

## I WISH YOU ALL THE JOYS OF The Holiday Season A Happy Christmas—A Prosperous New Year

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nibbling at is three years old, and not stale.

Our Cooks in the Field.

At the cooking and baking schools the students are taught how to do all sorts of work without any machinery to speak of. They are taught to make bake ovens, which consist of little more than a hole in the ground or of trenches covered with clay. One of these rude makeshifts is a kind of a barrel oven. A flour barrel, or any other old round thing is half sunk in the earth and clay put over it in such a way that when the fire is started the barrel burns out and the clay formed into an oven. They also have semi-cylinders of iron which are used sometimes. This was the form of oven that was employed largely during the Spanish-American War. It is, as General Sharpe says, a man-killer, and is only put up in cases of emergency. The army cooks are taught to do their work under all conditions, although the food equipment is now such that our army will have the best of meals while on the march and in camp. These will be prepared upon what are known as iron field ranges. They are of different sizes, one of which is so small that it could easily be carried on the back of a mule, and another, twice as big, which can be transported by wagon.

As Big as a Bathbox.

The small range is sufficient to do all the cooking for a company of fifty-five men, and nevertheless it is not as big as a woman's bathbox of the present time. It is about twenty inches square and sixteen inches high and at first sight it looks like a little safe or money chest. Nevertheless, it contains all the pans, kettles and equipment to supply that many men. It includes a stovepipe and a lantern and all the kitchen utensils.

How would any woman reader of

this article like to take a stove the size of a steamer trunk, and put all her kitchen tools in it and go off on a trip to cook for fifty-five men. That is what the army cook does. The range is set upon the ground, usually over a trench or hole and a fire built beneath it. It can be put up and taken down in fifteen minutes. During my stay at the school, the sergeant cook in charge took one out at the back and set it up in front of the camera. The photograph shows that the range only reaches my knee and nevertheless it will cook three meals a day, year in and year out, for fifty-five men. The other range, which is intended for 111 men, is perhaps twice as big. It is made of sheet steel, but it is to be made in the future of a pure iron, which will not rust. I am told that the commissary department now has enough of these two kinds of ranges on hand to supply an army of 250,000 men with food in the field, so that if an army of that size should be called into being we could supply them all with bread and food upon very short notice.

Kitchen Cars for the Troops. In addition to this arrangements have been made for a large number of kitchen cars or rolling kitchens. This is in connection with the Pullman company, which, at the suggestion of the commissary-general has remodeled some of its tourist cars for the purpose. The cars may be used for the tourist travel while they are not employed by the War Department, and in case of war they could be employed to carry the soldiers, and each would supply hot meals for 300 men at one time.

These are among some of the things that Uncle Sam, Patriarch, is doing to make of his army a live, active and always-ready-to-move fighting machine, in order that if war should unexpectedly come from any source he may not be found napping.

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